

Overseas Press Club Bulletin

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The Establishment Welcomes I. F. Stone

by Larry Stessin

After 38 years, I.F. Stone, journalism's angry man has made peace with The National Press Club in Washington. Recently, at the age of 73, Stone, whose newsletter was never coy in blasting the press for what he felt was its anemic coverage of the world scene, has rejoined the NPC — this time to the plaudits of his colleagues.

Stone's first brush with the club's policies came in 1943 when he tore up his membership card as a gesture of defiance for NPC's discriminatory practices. The specific cause of his ire occurred when he invited the distinguished black lawyer and judge William H. Hastie to lunch in the club's dining room. Although there were few diners in the room, Hastie was ignored by the serving staff and he left after an hour without as much as a glass of water to acknowledge his presence. Stone, never one to accept the status quo, began a campaign to get the club to update its ways.

He made the rounds of the members

urging them to sign an appeal to the governing body to change its by-laws against racial segregation. He needed 25 active members to support him in his cause. Only nine went along. Some years later — in the 1950's — the National Press Club did erase its color line and desegregated its membership rules. Stone then reapplied for membership.

He was blackballed.

Last month Stone was invited to be a guest of honor at the National Press Club and to be the luncheon speaker. Stone accepted his membership card, but not without a strong showing that he was still the maverick and gadfly of the past. In his talk Stone gave no brownie points to the Reagan Administration, a rebuke to some members of the press corps in Washington, and finally, about the press in general he said: "My chief complaint about the papers out in the country is that there is not enough news in them."

OPC Protests Sadat Expulsion of Newsman

The sharp attack President Sadat unleashed against newsmen in Egypt, amongst them Chris Harper of ABC Television, who was ordered out of the country within 24 hours, prompted OPC President **Henry Gellermann** to send the following message to Sadat:

"The Overseas Press Club of America expresses its deep concern over the expulsion of Mr. Chris Harper of the American Broadcasting Company Stop This order is contrary to all your public statements proclaiming freedom of the press in your country and the existence of democratic principles of your government Stop We respectfully urge you to reconsider this action as it appears contrary to your country's past hospitality extended to the members of the world's free press."

A copy of the message was also sent by wire to their ambassador in Washington, D.C., Ashraf A. Ghorbal, Ambassador of Egypt to the United States. A copy was also forwarded to President **Roone Arledge** of ABC News. The media was advised of the Club's action.

The expulsion came a week after a statement by Sadat to foreign newsmen that his government had no policy of prohibiting reporters from covering news events in his country. He added that no foreign correspondents need fear a government crackdown so long as "they told the truth."

He did not define his definition of "truth."

Will It Be Reuters-UPI?

The corporate mating game — or in the "lingo" of Wall Street — merger talks between Reuters and the UPI — have slowed down, the OPC Bulletin learned from sources close to the negotiations. At this writing, though the parties are still meeting, a snag developed when the E.W. Scripps Co. which owns UPI revealed that it was "talking to others" about spinning off the non-profit making news syndicate. This has come as no surprise to the financial community as Reuters has been wooing the UPI for over 25 years without success. One reason is that the Scripps organization is a cash rich empire with revenues of between \$500 million and \$600 million and through the years has maintained high hopes that the syndicate will pull out of its red bottom-line. The parent company has seen some light at the end of the tunnel when UPI reported a \$3.5 million deficit so far this year as against a \$5 million loss last year. Not insignificant a factor in the slowdown of negotiations is that Charles E. Scripps, 61, the grandson

of the founder and chairman of the parent company would like to keep UPI in the family.

Another speculation is that the Scripps executives would prefer that UPI, if purchased by outsiders should be owned by a U.S. company. Reuters is a London-based news company which last year earned over \$215 million on its computerized data services.

However if Reuters — or another suitor — does win out it faces a weighty financial outlay in personnel costs. Severance pay, retirement benefits, outplacement services to help laid-off employees in getting other jobs — not an uncommon practice in English firms — could come to about \$20 million dollars. Meanwhile, employees at the UPI are anxiously waiting the results of the on-going talks. Management of both syndicates have not communicated with their employees except for a routine release on June 9th that Scripps and Reuters are once again going through their periodic routine of talking merger.

Off the 'Tube' - But Not Out of Mind?

Walter Cronkite may be gone from the CBS nightly news but he had not been forgotten by the American public. A survey conducted by the International Platform Association, a lecture booking organization, Mr. Cronkite is the number one choice on the "most wanted" list of speakers at clubs, conventions, and colleges. Number two top draw on the lecture circuit is Henry Kissinger whose tab is \$15,000 a speech.

Reagan Shuns Press Conference, Newsday Charges

Newsday, which ranks among the top five newspapers in the country in circulation, has criticized President Reagan for downgrading the press conference as a communication media. The paper said that Ronald Reagan "has been less accessible to the press than any other president except Richard Nixon in the final months of his crumbling presidency."

The paper toted up only three meetings with newsmen — the last being on June 16th. The daily pointed out that the President's arms length relationship with the press takes into account the period of convalescence after he was shot.

Newsday further criticized the recent policy of the White House which prohibits questions from reporters during so called "photo opportunities."

"Televised speeches and prepared statements are no substitute for the give-and-take of a presidential news conference," the *Newsday* editors said in an editorial. "The gag rule at photo opportunity sessions would be a lot more acceptable if Reagan made himself available — regularly and frequently at full scale TV news conferences", the paper concluded.

A Symphony of Japanese Images



Exhibit: Overseas Press Club (The Chemists' Club)
52 East 41st Street (between Madison & Park Avenue) New York City

Date: November 1 through November 30, 1981

Open to the public, Monday-Friday
9AM-8PM — Admission free

Photographer: Bruno Zehnder

Book Review: Liebling's "The Press"

by Sidney Kline



Sidney Kline

A.J. (Abbott Joseph) Liebling wrote most of the *New Yorker's* "Wayward Press" pieces from 1945 until shortly before his death late in 1963, at 59. They were critiques of the handling of a big story of the moment by New York City's decreasing but still fairly numerous newspapers — four morning and three afternoon dailies and the *Wall Street Journal*. Newspaper people, newspaper buffs and much of the literate general public alike treasured a Liebling opus.

He was perceptive, informed, analytical, sometimes savage, sometimes smart-ass and always entertaining.

Most newspaper prose and criticism vanishes soon after publication. Not Liebling's. The old pro's work is still with us, revived again and again, and with reason. Now, Pantheon Books has reissued in soft cover a selected grouping of Liebling Wayward Press pieces entitled "The Press," first published in 1961 and republished with revisions in 1964 and 1975.

For those of us who were in the newspaper business when Liebling was taking apart Colonel Robert Rutherford McCormick or William Randolph Hearst or Westbrook Pegler or Senator Joseph McCarthy, or putting a sting on the Jelke call-girl story, or analyzing the 1962-63 newspaper strike that signaled the deaths of the *Herald Tribune*, *Mirror*, *World Telegram & Sun* and *Journal-American*, "The Press" evokes nostalgia, recall of big stories with which we were involved and sorrow at today's news scene.

It was fun to be a newspaperman in that era. We were proud of our profession and felt lucky to be in it. There were drawbacks, of course. I believe it was Joe Mitchell, Joe Liebling's peer at the *New Yorker*, who listed the hazards of the trade — "poverty, alcoholism, unemployment and Nicholas Murray Butler." Butler, to remind, was a president of Columbia University who made long, dull, uninspired speeches that were dutifully covered by all the newspapers because Butler was a publisher sacred cow.

There was then, too, a camaraderie and a closeness and a caring for others in the

fold that, I am advised, does not exist now on newspaper staffs and certainly is absent among those who labor at the networks. Money drives, career drives, internal savageries have twisted a modest selflessness into widespread selfishness, and that is a pity.

Liebling largely was deadly serious. In a 1963 epilogue in his book, Liebling wrote that nothing had happened to discredit the theme of the first edition: "The march to private monopoly and its inevitable, because profitable, consequences — newspapers newsless or filled with synthetic 'news.' This is like the displacement of oranges from 'orange drink.'" He saw, early, the trend to the one-newspaper city.

In her introduction to the 1975 edition of "The Press," Liebling's widow, the late Jean Stafford, a fine writer in her own right, noted the editorial tribute to Liebling in the *New York Times* of Dec. 30, 1963: "He was, by his own description, 'a chronic, incurable, recidivist reporter.' His death stills a pen that could inspire as well as wound. The press will be duller for the loss of his barbs."

This was Stafford's personal comment: "Joe did love the press. He harried it, ridiculed it, anatomized it, sternly brought it to book, punched it in the nose and gave it the hotfoot, but he loved it. It was his wayward concubine."

(Sidney Kline was a New York City newspaperman from 1936 through 1965 and a staff writer in New York for ABC network news from 1965 through 1977. He now freelances from his home in Woodstock, N.Y.)

Letters

TEL AVIV — Who is a journalist?

The Foreign Press Association raised the question at its last general meeting in Jerusalem. Eric Silver, correspondent for the *Guardian*, *Observer* and BBC, pointed out that most of the FPA officers and Board Members are technicians, soundmen, cameramen and fieldmanagers.

Reporters and journalists who write, dig, scoop, assess, analyze and evaluate are in the minority.

Definition of a field man: a bright secretary who warns the anchorman against walking backwards off a cliff. In this age of electronics, computers, satellites the "gimme the desk" reporter is a rarity.

A further sign of the future. The FPA was prepared to donate scholarships to deserving students. The motion was tabled when Jay Bushinsky, *Cable News* and *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter, said that he was the last instructor of journalism at the

N.Y. Times Adds Three New Features

With the typical humility that is characteristic of the *New York Times*, the paper has quietly added three new features designed to provide readers with greater in-depth coverage of the nation's two busiest news centers — New York and Washington D.C. In an interview with the *OPC Bulletin*, Arthur Gelb, deputy managing editor of the *Times*, discussed the why and wherefore of the latest additions to the daily's regular editorial format.

One innovation is a page devoted exclusively to "Washington Talk." Mr. Gelb pointed out that the *Times* executives have long felt that the mass of spot news that pours out of the capital leaves little room for the wealth of material that is more talked about than written about.

That does not mean that the page will be a repository for gossip, poop, rumor or tattle, he explained. But "inside stories," not necessarily of the investigative reporting variety, will be grist for the page's content. In case some readers might suspect that "Washington Talk" will be heavy reading, the September 16th issue, for example, had a piece on "The President's Doodles" with illustrations by Ronald Reagan. The caption was equally tongue in cheek and it read: "Artist in Residence: President Reagan habitually doodles through Cabinet and staff meetings. He favors a felt-tip pen and often gives his signed work — reminiscent of movie stars of the 1940's and comic-strip characters such as Maggie and Jiggs and Dick Tracy — as prizes to Cabinet members."

A day later the AP and UPI did Presidential "doodle" stories of their own and wired the pieces to their subscribers around the world.

Another item was a quote from a ruling the Department of Agriculture issued on the subject of "lemons." The paragraph revealed — what many people already know — that bureaucratic English is

gobbledegook. Deciphered, the ruling declared that no lemons smaller than 1.82 inches in diameter could be shipped into the marketplace. Midget lemons, the bureau ruled, must be left on trees to nurture and grow.

"Washington Talk" is supervised by Bill Kovach, chief of the *Times* Washington Bureau, with Terrance Smith as his aide.

The two other new features in the *Times* — both of which have been running for several months — deal with the Big Apple. Obviously the title of both columns is "New York." Sidney Schanberg, winner of several OPC awards, writes a column about this city in the style of personal journalism. Because the Schanberg pieces are of the "as I see it" variety, he reports to Max Frankel, chief of the *Times* Editorial Page.

The other metropolitan column records the sights and sounds of the big city. Anna Quindlen's "About New York" are mostly human interest articles. This is not the first time that the *Times* has had an "About New York" feature. Meyer (Mike) Berger, a legend in the history of journalism, wrote an "About New York" column in the 50's and it was discontinued when Berger passed away.

New Applications

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Irving S. Taubkin, editor of the *OPC Bulletin* is on vacation.

Guest editor: **Larry Stessin**.

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Irvin S. Taubkin, Editor; Helen Alpert, George E. Burns, Rosalind Massow, Rosalind Moore, Charles J. Schreiber, associate editors.

Tel Aviv University three years ago and that today not a single Israeli university offers a course in that subject.

—**Max Gendel**

SÃO PAULO — Everett G. Martin, *The Wall Street Journal's* veteran staff writer who covers South America from New York, recently ended a month's stay in São Paulo followed by a quick trip to Buenos Aires. Martin relates a visit to Embraer in São Jose dos Campos and a hair-raising flight in one of the company's new aircraft now in development.

Anton Jiesamfoek, free lance for Dutch radio and television, has temporarily moved to the Miami area from Rio de Janeiro in order better to cover the war in El Salvador.

—**Bill Hieronymus**

Who, What, Where

By ROSALIND MASSOW

EDITORIAL BONANZA . . . Bases loaded is how OPC'er **Gregory McDonald** perceives his happy situation this fall. In October, Dell releases a huge edition of his novel "Who Took Toby Rinaldi?" In November, Warner Books will publish an equally large edition of "Fletch and the Widow Bradley" (his fourth Fletch novel), and in December Ballantine brings out an enormous edition of "The Buck Passes Flynn" His comment? "Never thought I'd look like Barbara Cartland, it's all a coincidence."

TOP PROF . . . **Larry Stessin** tapped for membership in the prestigious American Association of Emeriti. In case you never heard of it, it's an honorary society of university professors named by their schools for scholarship and teaching achievement. Stessin and a team of businessmen and educators set up the School of Management at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Professor Stessin also taught at N.Y.U. and Hofstra.

ARTICLES . . . Method journalist **Grace Halsell** lived with Palestinian Arabs, Jewish Settlers and Christians in the Holy Land to research her new book "Journey to Jerusalem." She explains her kinship to all three faiths in a feature article, "Three Families, Three Faiths," published in PHP, A Forum for a Better World . . . **Jeanne Toomey**, profiles novelist Howard Crook, in *Editor and Publisher*. Crook, a former newsman, sold his novel, "The Brownstone Cavalry," Summit Books, to Twentieth Century Fox for \$350,000.

HAIL TO A NEW CHIEF . . . **Norman Schorr's** wife Thelma, has been named president and publisher of the American Journal of Nursing Company. (They publish six magazines and produce multi media educational materials.) Long an activist in the nursing field, Mrs. Schorr started her career as a nurse at Bellevue, shifted over to editorial work when wooed by the *American Journal of Nursing Magazine*. Editor of the company's flagship publication for the last 11 years, Mrs. Schorr's magazine won a national award in 1979 . . . Member **Norman Schorr** recently addressed the Congress of the International Council of Nurses in Los Angeles on the importance of improving communications to win public understanding and support for nurses' goals. Attending the conference were nursing officials from 83 countries.

EAT, DRINK WITH US AT OPC!

Sniper Misses OPCer Lives

Active non-resident member **Bob Poos**, Executive Editor of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* in Boulder, Colo., recently returned for three weeks of covering the war in El Salvador.

Poos and *New York Times* stringer Ann Nelson both managed to get rarely granted interviews with Col. Jose Garcia, Minister of Defense.

Then Poos, who has been covering wars for the AP and SOF for 20 some years, went out on an operation with Alpha Company, First Battalion, Fifth Brigade in San Vicente Province into territory occupied by Communist guerrillas for some two years. He got into two days of hard fighting during which three government soldiers were killed and several more wounded. About 25 guerrillas were killed, Poos estimates.

Poos, who has covered Vietnam (more than two years), Laos, the Communist insurgency in Malaysia, the Malaysian-Indonesian confrontation, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and Southwest Africa, says this war is, along with Vietnam, the most dangerous he has ever seen. During the two-day battle, he was pinned down by heavy machine-gun and rifle fire and at one point a sniper targeted him and put two rounds about a foot away from his head.

A REMINDER: OPC members are invited to join the Chemists' Round Tables at lunch if they so desire. There are TWO Round Tables daily . . . Many OPCers I spoke to were not aware of this, and if you're dining alone, it's a good thing to know.

—Millicent Brower

Washington Ticker

By JESSIE STEARNS

Eric Sevareid will be host of ENTERPRISE, a series of 13 half-hour documentaries on how American business works, on PBS stations.

Florida Rep. Claude Pepper, the 81-year old veteran of Congress, and chairman, House Select Committee on Aging, begins an advice column going to some 800 newspapers in the newspaper Enterprise Association. He will not be paid since material for the column comes from letters he receives at the committee. He will be assisted in the writing by committee staff director Charles Edwards.

UPI-Washington named A. Mitchell Koppelman bureau manager and editor for NewsPictures, replacing Bill Cranford, who goes to Atlanta.

William L. Atkins, Southern Cal News-Picture editor in Los Angeles, replaces Koppelman as Washington editor.

Each of the three major U.S. networks has sent a correspondent to the Peoples Republic of China. In Peking and working are: NBC-Jack Reynolds; ABC-Jim Lorey; and CBS-OPC'er **Bruce Dunning**.

Placement

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